



SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON AGING

June 18, 1990

Dr. Fran Wheeler, Director
Center for Health Promotion
S. C. Department of Health and
Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

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DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH PROMOTION

Dear Dr. Wheeler:

The South Carolina Commission on Aging is quite familiar with the illls of tobacco use. Smoking is a significant cause of morbidity and mortality of older adults in South Carolina. It is a major risk factor in eight of the top sixteen causes of death for people aged 65 and older. Forty-one percent of cancer deaths in men and 15 percent in women 65 years and older are smoking related. Of the respiratory system disease deaths, 55 percent among men 65 years and older, and 38 percent among women of the same age, are attributable to smoking. Deaths from chronic obstructive lung disease rise to 425 per 100,000 adults among smokers 75 - 84 years compared to 50 per 100,000 for non-smokers.

Smoking complicates illnesses and conditions which are more prevalent in older people. These include heart disease, high blood pressure, circulatory and vascular conditions, duodenal ulcers, osteoporosis and diabetes.

Smoking can also affect the mean level for certain drugs and can interfere with a range of other drug therapies. The result is that the drug dosages for the average smoker may be sub-therapeutic or ineffective.

Though the prevalence rates for older adults are lower than younger adults, current smokers aged 50 - 74 are especially at risk from continued smoking because (1) they have smoked longer; (2) they have been and continue to be heavier smokers; and (3) they are more likely to have chronic disease which may be worsened by smoking. Since one in four persons will be aged 55 and older by 2010, the implications of these smoking rates are profound!

Our agency would enthusiastically support a project which would work to reduce smoking in South Carolina. The building of a coalition to form a broad base of support statewide seems to be an excellent plan. The S. C. Department of Health and Environmental Control with extensive experience in health planning, evaluation, and education, and the Cancer Society with its expertise in cancer research are ideal organizations to combine efforts for a successful grant project.

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON AGING - Fontaine Business Center
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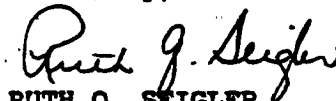


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The South Carolina Commission on Aging is committed to the health and well-being of older adults in South Carolina and would look forward to actively participating in this coalition and providing assistance as needed to assure healthy aging in our state.

Sincerely,



RUTH Q. SEIGLER
Executive Director

RQS/MB/nbb

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